



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2023

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/22/3295650

St Francis, Tysea Hill, Stapleford Abbots, Romford RM4 1JP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs B Francis against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/EPF/3086/21, dated 28 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to enlarge existing dwelling and including raising of roof line.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for alterations and extensions to enlarge existing dwelling and including raising of roof line at St Francis, Tysea Hill, Stapleford Abbots, Romford RM4 1JP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/EPF/3086/21, dated 28 November 2021, and the attached schedule of conditions.

Procedural Matter

2. My attention has been drawn to policies from the emerging Local Plan Submission Version (2017) (the emerging Local Plan). Although not an adopted document, I am not aware of any unresolved objections in respect of the cited policies. Accordingly, I have attributed them some weight in my considerations.

Main Issue

3. The main issue relevant to this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site contains an existing detached dwelling located in a predominantly residential area. To the rear of the property is a garden, part of which is in the Green Belt. In addition, the dwelling is set back from the highway edge by a significant amount. The surrounding area contains a large number of dwellings, which are constructed to differing scales, designs, proportions and materials.
5. The proposed development includes front and rear extensions, an increase in height of the dwelling and installation of front and rear dormer windows. Although this would add to the scale of the appellant's dwelling, it would be viewed alongside other existing buildings.

6. Given the mixed character in the surrounding area, these variations would not appear incongruous as they contribute to a generally varied built environment as they would be viewed alongside contrastingly designed buildings. In addition, on my site visit I noted the presence of existing buildings that were constructed to different palettes of materials and some different gradients of roof. Some of the neighbouring dwellings include projecting elements and dormer windows owing to the presence of dormer windows in the surrounding area, the height of the proposed development would not be incongruous.
7. Therefore, within this context, the design of the proposed development would not erode any prevailing character. Furthermore, although the development would result in an increase in the overall scale of the dwelling, the proposal, including its scale, would not be discordant as it would be located alongside buildings of different designs.
8. Furthermore, the development would not be prominently located. This is because the dwelling is set back from the highway by a significant margin. As part of the area's varied character, other dwellings are set back from the highway by differing amounts. Therefore, the proposed development would be relatively well screened from the surrounding area. In result, the siting of the development means that it would not be a prominent addition to the locality.
9. The proposed development would be visible from the neighbouring properties. However, such views would be made at an oblique angle. In consequence, such views would not be a prominent addition to the locality.
10. Therefore, even though the development would have a different form to other dwellings in the surrounding area, it would not result in an adverse effect upon the character of the surrounding area. In addition, although the proposed development includes varying architectural features, the mass of the development would not appear discordant given the differing designs in the surrounding area.
11. It is possible to impose a condition that would control the materials from which the proposed development is constructed. This means that the developments would harmonise with the existing building and also the style of construction utilised elsewhere in the surrounding area.
12. As mentioned, part of the rear garden is located within the Green Belt. Although the proposed development with therefore be viewable from the Green Belt, it would be viewed against a context of existing built-up areas. In addition, although the proposed development would result in an extension of the dwelling towards the Green Belt, the degree of projection would be relatively small. Therefore the proposed development would not impact upon the character and appearance of the Green Belt, or conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
13. In result, the development would be in conformity with the requirements of Policies DM9 and DM10 of the emerging Local Plan. Amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that new developments are constructed to a high design specification; and complement the form and setting of the original building.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conform with the requirements of Policies

CP2, CP7 and DBE10 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan (1998). Amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that the developments maintain the quality of the built environment; make the fullest use of the existing urban area; and complement the streetscene and existing building.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard implementation condition, a condition specifying the approved plans is necessary in the interests of defining the scope of the development. The Council has suggested that a condition be imposed that would prevent the space created by the flat roof element of the proposed development from being used for recreation purposes. Owing to the proximity of the development to neighbouring properties, this condition is necessary and reasonable to ensure that the development does not erode the privacy levels of the occupiers of adjoining dwellings.
16. The Council have suggested a condition that would require the extension to be constructed from materials that match the existing dwelling. However, the submitted plans show a variety of materials to be used. Therefore, such a condition lacks sufficient precision. In result, I have imposed a condition that would enable the Council to approve details of the materials, from which the extension would be constructed. This is necessary in order to ensure that the development harmonises with its surroundings.

Conclusion

17. For the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, and planning permission granted, subject to conditions.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Block Plan; Location Plan; SF.P2.23; SF.P2.24; SF.P2.25; SF.P2.26; and SF.P2.27.
- 3) Prior to any above ground works taking place, full details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) Access to the flat roof over the extension hereby approved shall be for maintenance or emergency purposes only and the flat roof shall not be used as a seating area, roof garden, terrace, patio or similar amenity area.